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Larvicidal Activity of *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn. (Nymphaeaceae) against *Anopheles stephensi* (Liston 1901) and its Effect on Non-target Organisms

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Abstract

Background and objective: Control of mosquito vector is of paramount significance to reduce disease incidences as proper vaccines against mosquito borne diseases are yet to develop. Standard amalgamation of cost effective, target specific and bio-degradable insecticides is necessary owing to vector resistance, an evolutionary phenomenon and intoxication of nature through indiscriminate use of chemical insecticides. The present study projected larvicidal activities of the crude and solvent extracts of *Nelumbo nucifera* seed coats against the malarial vector *Anopheles stephensi* under laboratory conditions.

Methods: Crude extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coats were scrutinized for larvicidal activity against 1st to 4th instars larvae of *A. stephensi*. Solvent extractions of the same material fractions were carried out by means of petroleum ether, ethyl acetate and water. Dose dependent mortality assay was performed by graded concentrations (from 60 ppm to 180 ppm) of the solvent extracts. Quantifications of LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values were consummated through log-probit analyses. ANOVA analyses were performed for statistical justifications of the larvicidal property. Impacts of the extracts on a non-target water fauna were evaluated under laboratory conditions.

Result: The highest mortality was recorded in 0.5% concentration of crude extract after 72 hours of post exposure. Ethyl acetate extract was found to be the most potent larvicidal agent exerting efficient larvicidal activity amongst all the three solvent extracts. Following introduction of ethyl acetate extract, 1st and 2nd instars larvae exhibited 100 per cent mortality within 72 hours of post-exposure. The mortality rates for 3rd and 4th instars were 96 and 72 per cent respectively with the same observation period. The rate of mortality (Y) was found to be positively correlated with the concentration (X) through regression analyses. ANOVA analyses established the statistical significance of the larvicidal activity of the seed coat extractives. However, the non-target populations were entirely non-responsive to extracts under study.

Conclusion: Seed coat extracts of *N. nucifera* is effective against *A. stephensi* larvae. It is non-toxic to non-target organisms and environment-friendly.

Keywords *Nelumbo nucifera*; Seed coat; Larvicidal; *Anopheles stephensi*; Non-target organism

1. Introduction

Amongst all arthropods, mosquitoes are the most abundant blemished insect for spreading many noxious tropical and subtropical diseases like filariasis, yellow fever, malaria, dengue, different types of encephalitis like Japanese encephalitis and many more diseases resulting millions of deaths yearly. Apart from mortality, mosquito bites result into angioedema, intense itching, redness of skin and swellings. Disease transmission path includes broad regions around the equator especially much of sub Saharan Africa, Asia and the Americas. *Anopheles stephensi* spread the

noxious disease malaria in urban areas mainly. WHO has reported 219 million malarial cases with 1.2 million deaths in 2010 (Nayyar et al., 2012). There are about 10,000 malaria cases per year in Western Europe and 1300–1500 in the United States (Taylor et al., 2012). Rainfall, warm temperatures and stagnant water bodies provide ideal habitats for mosquito larvae, so, malaria is prevalent in tropical and sub tropical regions. In urban area *An. stephensi* chooses different water-bodies for breeding, primarily in overhead tanks, artificial containers, walls and ground level water tanks (Jeyabalan et al., 2003). Till now many malarial

cases are unreported and precise data is unavailable in many rural areas.

To prevent such types of malevolent diseases and to reduce fatality thereof, it is indispensable to find a way to control the mosquito population. For the purpose of vector control plentiful simulated insecticides have been developed and used against the vector and achieved a significant success, but it contains some alarming drawbacks like non-selectiveness and non-biodegradability which leads to toxic hazards (Wattal *et al.*, 1981). Nevertheless indiscriminate use of commercial insecticides results genetic resistance (Devine, 2007) to pesticides among vector species, arbitrary use of those results some adverse effect on ecosystem, environment and to human health as well (Lee *et al.*, 2001). For long term applications it is more difficult to rely upon the obtainable mosquitocidal agents after the outcome of bio pesticide resistance (Tabashnik, 1994), so, finding of eco-friendly and target specific insecticides specially from plant origin (Rawani *et al.*, 2009; Chowdhury *et al.*, 2009; Chakraborty *et al.*, 2013) are apparent in a standard manner.

Nelumbo nucifera, the holy lotus found throughout India is a large aquatic medicinal plant with stout, creeping rhizome. Anti-diarrheal and antimicrobial properties (Mukherjee, 2002) of *N. nucifera* have been reported. Anti-inflammatory and anti-tumour effects; mediated by the presence of betulinic acid, a steroidal pentacyclic triterpenoid of this plant are also well documented (Mukherjee *et al.* 1997; Chou *et al.*, 2000). This plant is well recognized for antioxidant (Ling *et al.*, 2005) anti-arrhythmic (Yu and Hu, 1997) properties.

Though diverse parts of *N. nucifera* have been stepped to discover several medicinal inimitabilities, seed coat has not yet been reported to contain mosquitocidal agents.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Assemblage of plant materials

Fresh seedpods of *Nelumbo nucifera* (Nymphaeaceae) were collected randomly from the local ponds of Burdwan (23°16'N, 87°54'E), West Bengal, India

during September to November 2012. The voucher specimen was numbered (voucher no. GCASR-03) and kept as a herbarium in the Department of Zoology, The University of Burdwan.

2.2 Nurturing the larvae and colony set up

Larvae of *An. stephensi* were collected from Kolkata and for further bioassay experiments larval colony is maintained under laboratory condition. The larvae were periodically fed with a diet containing powder of Brewer yeast, dog biscuits and algae mixture in 3:1:1 ratio (Kamaraj *et al.*, 2011a) and kept in plastic trays filled with tap water in a germ free condition. Pupae were collected from the trays and transferred to insectary (45×45×40 cm) for adult immergence. During the rearing of adults, they continuously provided a 10% sucrose solution with multivitamin syrup in a container with a cotton wick. The cotton was changed every day and kept moist with the solution. The mosquitoes were identified by the identification keys of Christophers (1933), Barraud (1934) and Chandra G (2000). In a different glass cage, the adults of *An. stephensi* were reared, on the 5th day; adults were given a blood meal from a non-motile shaved pigeon resting on the cages overnight for blood-feeding by females. Glass Petri dishes filled with 100 ml of tap water were kept inside the cage for oviposition. The eggs were unperturbed and allowed to hatch under laboratory conditions. In laboratory the colony of *An. stephensi* were maintained by repeating the process again and again. Mosquito colony was kept at 27±2°C, 75–85% relative humidity (RH), with a photoperiod of 14:10 h light/dark cycle.

2.3 Crude extracts procurements

Fresh and young seed coats of *N. nucifera* were rinsed in tap water followed by distilled water and soaked on a paper towel. Then the unspotted seed coats were minced by electric grinder and the liquid was filtered by Whatman's no-1 filter paper. The filtrate solution was considered as the stock crude solution (100% concentration) and stored in refrigerator for future use.

2.4 Differential solvent extraction

For solvent extraction, fresh and clean seed coats of *N. nucifera* were dried for few days in shed. 120 g dried

seed coats of *N. nucifera* were put into the 'thimble' of the Soxhlet apparatus while 1200 ml solvent was loaded into the 'still pot' following 1:10 ratio. Three different solvents in a non-polar to polar fashion viz. petroleum ether, ethyl acetate and water were passed through the column one after another. The extraction phase was set for 8 hours a day with a maximum extraction period of 72 hours for a particular solvent. The extracts were collected from solvent chamber and concentrated through evaporation in a rotary evaporator and the residue obtained was stored at 4°C in a refrigerator.

2.5 Dose dependent larvicidal bioassay

Trusting the WHO standard protocol (WHO/ VBC, 1981) the larvicidal bioassay was executed at the Mosquito, Microbiology and Nano Technology Research Units, Parasitology Laboratory, The University of Burdwan. Instars wise 25 larvae of *A. stephensi* were affianced in Petri-dishes of 9 cm diameter (150 mL capacity) filled with 100 mL of tap water. From 0.1% to 0.5% crude extractives were added in different Petri dishes while 60 ppm to 180 ppm solvent extracts was given in different Petri dishes for performing larvicidal bioassay. Each experiment was performed in triplicate (n=75) with a set of controls. Petri dishes were retained at room temperature ($29 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$), within $88 \pm 2\%$ relative humidity range for a total observation period of 72 hours. The larvae were considered dead when they didn't exhibit any movement by the pricking with a sharp needle in the siphon or cervical region or they were unable to achieve the water surface (Macedo *et al.*, 1997). The no. of dead wrigglers was calculated every 24 hours period up to 72 hours and percentage mortality was recorded from the average value of three replicates. The mortality of 48 h and 72 h were expressed by additions of the mortalities of 24 h and 48 h, respectively. Initially all the solvent extractives were screened against 3rd instars larvae and then the experiment was elaborated with the best active fraction against all the instars.

2.6 Effects on non-target populations

The little creatures sharing the same environment with mosquitoes are considered as the most fatal risk group. Vulnerability of these organisms to seed coat extractives was figured out on *Chironomus*

circumdatatus larvae (insect). They were exposed to concentration level of LC₅₀ value (72 hours of post-exposure) of 3rd instars larvae to examine the mortality and other irregularities such as tardiness of swimming activity up to 72 h of exposure.

2.7 Statistical analyses

The percentage mortalities (%M) were precised by Abbott's formula (Abott WS, 1925) during the observation of larvicidal potentiality of the seed coat extracts. Judicious determination of LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values of crude and solvent extracts were carried out through Log-probit and regression analyses. Further statistical calculations were done through ANOVA analyses using instars, hours of exposure and concentrations as three random variables to validate the significance between the above parameters and larval mortality.

3. Results

Different corporal characteristics and percentage yields for each solvent were significantly different from the other solvents as shown in Table 1. Larval mortalities at different concentrations of crude extractives of *N. nucifera* seed coats against *An. stephensi* wrigglers were presented instars wise in Table 2. The mortality percentages using all the three different extractives against 3rd instars larvae were presented in Figure 1. Ethyl acetate extract was found to be the choicest larvicide, through several trials, amongst all the extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coats. The larval mortality of *An. stephensi* using ethyl acetate extractives was depicted in Table 3. Log probit analyses clearly indicated augmentations in LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values (at 95% confidence level) vis-à-vis late stages larvae which were subsequently subordinated with increase in post-exposure period (from 24 hours to 72 hours) (Table 4). All through the experiment the concentration of ethyl acetate extractives were found to be positively correlated with rate of mortality having a regression coefficient nearly 1. Further analyses using completely randomized three way ANOVA regarding concentration (C), hour (H) and instars (I) as three parameters revealed the statistical significance of the larvicidal effect of ethyl acetate extractive against *An. Stephensi* (Table 5). The non-target populations were found in normal condition after 72 h of post-exposure.

Larvicidal Activity of *Nelumbo nucifera* against *Anopheles stephensi* and its Effect on Non-target Organisms

Table 1 Differential yields and some physical characters of *N. nucifera* seed coat extracts

Solvent extract	Appearance	Colour	Solubility	pH	Odor	Yield
Petroleum ether	Liquid	Greenish-yellow	Soluble in DMSO	6.62	Odorless	8.65 g
Ethyl acetate	Semi-solid	black	Soluble in acetone, absolute alcohol, water	6.94	offensive	9.20 g
Water	Liquid	Brownish yellow	Soluble in absolute alcohol	7.24	offensive	2.03 g

Table 2 Percent mortality of *An. stephensi* larvae using crude extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coats

Larval Instars	Concentration (%)	Mortality rate (Mean \pm SE)		
		24h	48h	72h
1 st	0.1	29.32 \pm 1.25	33.33 \pm 0.82	41.33 \pm 0.94
	0.2	37.32 \pm 1.63	45.33 \pm 1.41	52.00 \pm 0.82
	0.3	50.67 \pm 2.05	60.00 \pm 0.00	64.00 \pm 0.94
	0.4	68.00 \pm 1.63	73.33 \pm 0.94	80.00 \pm 1.47
	0.5	78.67 \pm 0.80	82.67 \pm 0.65	84.00 \pm 0.00
2 nd	0.1	24.00 \pm 0.94	32.00 \pm 0.82	36.00 \pm 1.70
	0.2	34.67 \pm 2.05	40.00 \pm 1.63	42.67 \pm 0.65
	0.3	52.00 \pm 2.16	56.00 \pm 2.05	60.00 \pm 0.82
	0.4	69.33 \pm 1.70	72.00 \pm 0.82	74.67 \pm 1.25
	0.5	73.33 \pm 1.41	77.33 \pm 0.47	80.00 \pm 0.00
3 rd	0.1	22.67 \pm 0.00	29.33 \pm 0.80	34.67 \pm 1.47
	0.2	32.00 \pm 0.94	37.33 \pm 1.25	40.00 \pm 2.45
	0.3	49.33 \pm 0.00	53.33 \pm 1.41	57.33 \pm 0.00
	0.4	66.67 \pm 1.94	69.33 \pm 1.25	74.67 \pm 1.41
	0.5	70.67 \pm 1.63	73.00 \pm 0.00	78.67 \pm 0.00
4 th	0.1	0.00 \pm 0.00	8.00 \pm 1.25	24.00 \pm 0.00
	0.2	2.67 \pm 1.25	9.33 \pm 0.47	30.67 \pm 0.00
	0.3	4.00 \pm 0.00	13.33 \pm 2.87	34.67 \pm 0.47
	0.4	5.33 \pm 0.47	17.33 \pm 1.45	36.00 \pm 0.82
	0.5	6.67 \pm 1.28	21.33 \pm 1.63	41.33 \pm 2.16

Table 4 Assessment of LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values of ethyl acetate extract of *N. nucifera* through log-probit and regression analyses

Larval Instars	Period of Exposure	LC ₅₀	LC ₉₀	Regression	R ² - value
1 st	24	54.62	261.56	0.07 x + 9.86	0.96
	48	37.57	179.53	0.05 x + 14.06	0.99
	72	34.09	100.44	0.05 x + 16.73	0.95
2 nd	24	73.34	496.21	0.06 x + 8.60	0.99
	48	47.96	382.15	0.05 x + 11.46	0.99
	72	43.74	143.46	0.06 x + 13.13	0.97
3 rd	24	105.36	459.26	0.08 x + 3.27	0.95
	48	78.72	301.85	0.07 x + 6.8	0.95
	72	50.27	167.34	0.07 x + 11.86	0.97
4 th	24	129.65	972.90	0.06 x + 4.67	0.99
	48	94.98	914.00	0.05 x + 7.87	0.97
	72	79.33	755.30	0.06 x + 8.27	0.96

Note: x = concentration (in ppm) of solvent extracts.

Table 3 Percent mortality of *An. stephensi* larvae using ethyl acetate extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coats

Larval Instars	Concentration ppm (mg/L)	Mortality rate (Mean \pm SE)		
		24 h	48 h	72 h
1 st	60	56.00 \pm 0.94	68.00 \pm 0.94	77.33 \pm 0.82
	90	61.33 \pm 1.63	74.67 \pm 2.05	84.00 \pm 2.95
	120	76.00 \pm 2.05	80.00 \pm 1.70	93.33 \pm 0.94
	150	82.67 \pm 1.63	86.67 \pm 0.94	97.33 \pm 1.25
	180	86.67 \pm 0.80	92.00 \pm 0.65	100.00 \pm 0.00
2 nd	60	49.33 \pm 0.80	57.33 \pm 0.82	68.00 \pm 0.82
	90	54.67 \pm 1.25	67.67 \pm 1.63	77.33 \pm 2.87
	120	62.67 \pm 2.16	72.00 \pm 1.41	80.00 \pm 0.82
	150	69.33 \pm 1.25	77.33 \pm 0.81	89.33 \pm 1.25
	180	77.33 \pm 1.41	84.00 \pm 0.47	100.00 \pm 0.00
3 rd	60	36.00 \pm 0.00	41.33 \pm 0.47	61.33 \pm 1.47
	90	41.33 \pm 0.82	58.67 \pm 1.25	74.67 \pm 2.45
	120	48.00 \pm 0.00	66.67 \pm 1.25	80.00 \pm 0.00
	150	66.67 \pm 1.94	73.33 \pm 1.25	85.33 \pm 0.47
	180	73.33 \pm 0.94	80.00 \pm 0.00	96.00 \pm 0.00
4 th	60	32.00 \pm 1.92	41.33 \pm 0.00	44.00 \pm 0.82
	90	42.67 \pm 0.47	50.67 \pm 0.47	54.67 \pm 2.47
	120	48.00 \pm 0.00	56.00 \pm 1.28	62.67 \pm 0.47
	150	54.67 \pm 0.47	61.33 \pm 1.45	65.33 \pm 0.82
	180	62.67 \pm 0.47	65.33 \pm 0.47	72.00 \pm 0.82

Table 5 Completely randomized three way ANOVA analysis using concentration (C), hour (H) and instars (I) as three parameters

Source of variation	Sum of squares (SS)	Degree of freedom (df)	Mean of squares (MS)	F value	p-level
Instars (I)	1079.91	3	359.97	285.44	0.00
Hours (H)	670.08	2	335.04	265.67	0.00
Conc. (C)	1223.02	4	305.76	242.45	0.00
I \times H	50.99	6	8.50	6.74	0.00
I \times C	31.42	12	2.62	2.08	0.02
H \times C	15.31	8	1.91	1.52	0.16
I \times H \times C	20.51	24	0.85	0.68	0.86
Within groups	151.33	120	1.26	---	---
Total	3242.58	179	18.12	----	---

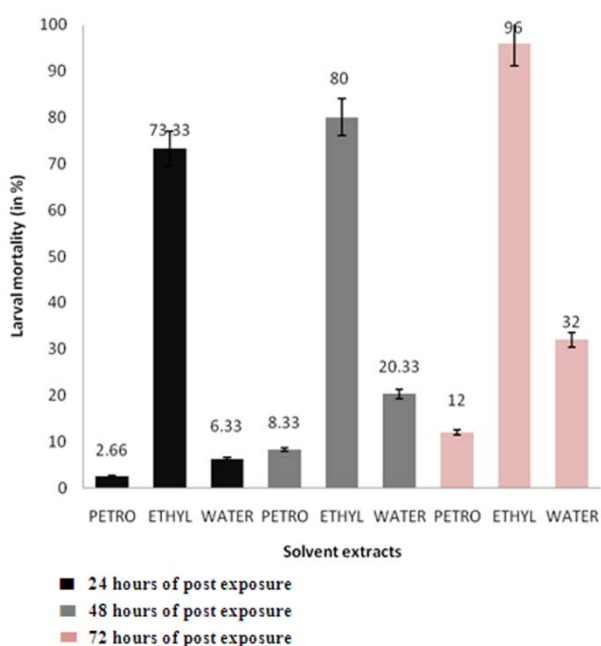


Figure 1 Graphical presentation of the larval mortality using all the three different extracts against 3rd instars larvae of *An. stephensi*

4. Discussion

Incapability to control of mosquito borne diseases remains a big dispute even today and indeed most challenging. Though personal protection from mosquito bites through several means are always advised, it is very little to control the menace. The best approach to shrink mosquito population is wrigglers' control. Employment of cost-effective, biodegradable natural insecticides from botanicals has given importance, recently, for this purpose. Mosquito larvicidal potentiality of several plants is verified by a number of workers (Singha *et al.*, 2012; Bhattacharya and Chandra 2013, 2014; Kundu *et al.*, 2013). Plant constituents are well established as pupicidal (Rawani *et al.*, 2012), repellent, adulticidal and smoke toxic (Singha *et al.*, 2011, Chowdhury *et al.*, 2007) against different mosquito species. The present study well conferred the target specific larvicidal activity of *N. nucifera* seed coats against *An. stephensi*. Govindarajan reported that methanol extract of *Andrographis paniculata*, *Eclipta alba*, and *Cardiospermum halicacabum* are very much effective against the larvae of *An. stephensi* with the median lethal concentration values of 79.68, 112.56, and 133.01 mg/L respectively. However, we found that the LC₅₀ value of 3rd instars larvae was 50.27 mg/L (ppm)

using ethyl acetate extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coat. Adhikari *et al.* (2012) reported the larvicidal activity of glacial acetic acid, an organic acid, against *An. stephensi*. They recorded 100% mortality of 3rd instars in 0.5% solution. Ethyl acetate extracts of *Annona squamosa* bark was reported to be larvicidal against the 4th instars larvae of *An. stephensi* (Kamaraj *et al.*, 2010) where LC₉₀ values varied in between 70.38-210.68 ppm. *N. nucifera* leaf extract using methanol as solvent was found to be mosquitocidal against early 4th instars *An. stephensi* larvae (Kamaraj *et al.*, 2011b) with the median lethal concentration 37.49 ppm following a period of 48 hours. We noticed the LC₅₀ value of 94.98 ppm against mature 4th instars of *An. stephensi* larvae when the observation period was set at 48 hours. Ethyl acetate extracts of *N. nucifera* seed coats showed very promising responses against the 1st and 2nd instars of *An. stephensi* with the median lethal concentration values of 34.09 ppm and 43.74 ppm respectively. Entire larval populations of 1st and 2nd instars were diminished following a post-exposure period of 72 hours with no significant detrimental effect on non-target population. This ascertained the selective toxicity of the extract under study with meticulousness. High mortality percentage against 3rd instars and a moderate mortality value against 4th instars (table-3) pertained to the suitability of this active fraction as mosquitocidal bio-pesticide against *An. stephensi*.

In concise, the findings of the present study reveal that the seed coat extracts of *N. nucifera* possess larvicidal activity against *An. stephensi*. Other laboratory investigations are mandatory for enlightening the actual chemical amalgam responsible for larvicidal activity. This veteran activity may again be evaluated against *An. stephensi* larvae in field conditions. For successful utilization of this novel mosquitocidal source through commercial formulation detail research is necessary.

Conflict of interest statement

We pronounce that we don't have any conflict of interest.

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